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40D

40 Ways in 40 Days:
A Guide to Prayer

40 Ways in 40 Days
A Lenten Guide to Prayer

North United Methodist Church

Rev. Darren Cushman Wood

Lent 2018

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“Lord, who throughout these forty days
for us didst fast and pray,
teach us with thee to mourn our sins
and close by thee to stay.”

The Lenten hymn summarizes the purpose of the season: “close by thee to stay.” Lent is known for all sorts of religious practices, from fasting chocolate to eating breakfasts in church basements on Saturday mornings (ala, Hoosier Methodists). Lent is 40 days, plus the Sundays, between Ash Wednesday and Easter. The real focus of the season is to draw us closer to God. This Lenten workbook gives you 40 ways to get closer to God through prayer.

PRAYER

What is prayer? In his writings, Henri Nouwen defined prayer in many different ways¹:

- “To pray means to think and live in the presence of God”
- “Prayer is the way to let the life-giving Spirit of God penetrate all the corners of my being”
- “Prayer is the act by which we divest ourselves of all false belongings and become free to belong to God and God alone.”
- “To pray means to stop expecting from God the same small-mindedness which you discover in yourself.”
- “Prayer means letting God’s creative love touch the most hidden places of our being and letting Jesus’ way of the cross truly become our way.”

The list of definitions could go on, but suffice it to say that the enormity of prayer can leave us wondering how to do it.

40W/40D

This workbook will help you discover practical ways to pray. There is 1 exercise for each day of Lent, except for Sundays during which your prayer exercise is public worship. This is 40 ways to pray for the 40 days of Lent—40W/40D.

Think of this workbook as a box of recipes that provide a step-by-step guide to different forms of prayer. Roughly speaking, there is a flow to each week:

- Sundays—public worship
- Mondays—centering prayers
- Tuesdays—the Lord’s Prayer

¹ *The Only Necessary Thing*, compiled and edited by Wendy Wilson Greer.

- Wednesdays—prayers of adoration and thanksgiving
- Thursdays—prayers of intercession
- Fridays—prayers of confession and petition
- Saturdays—contemplation

Each prayer exercise is designed to be done in a single day (except for Maundy Thursday—Good Friday). They are for individual use but can be adapted to be done with others. Some of them are very short (less than a minute) and others require more time (such as 30 minutes).

The simpler ones are at the beginning of Lent and progress to longer, more complex exercises as you get closer to Easter. This way, you will develop your “spiritual stamina” as the season goes along.

Just as there are different kinds of temperaments and multiple forms of intelligences, we need a variety of ways to approach prayer. This workbook offers different types of prayers using a variety of approaches—silent reflection, writing, drawing, singing and dancing. Some of the prayers will feel comfortable but others will feel awkward. Even so, try them all to see which ones work for you. And like a recipe, feel free to adapt them to your temperament and needs.

Because some of the prayers require advance planning, be sure on Sundays to review all the exercises for a week. Here is a quick overview:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			Feb 14 Ashes Meditation	15 Lauds or Vespers	16 You are a Character	17 Work Prayer
18 Worship	19 Palms Down Palms Up	20 Lord’s Prayer Outline	21 3 Times a Day	22 Caim Prayer	23 Body Prayer of Confession	24 Daily Examen
25 Worship	26 Breath Prayer 1	27 Lord’s Prayer All Day	28 Slot Prayer	Mar 1 Prayers for the World	2 Lectio Divina	3 Wesleyan Quadrilateral
4 Worship	5 Jesus Prayer	6 Lord’s Prayer with Music	7 Wall of Prayer	8 Canticle of the Sun	9 Prayer of the Heart	10 Prayer Walk
11 Worship	12 I Am Here	13 Lord’s Prayer Paraphrase	14 Hymn for the Day	15 Prayers for the Dead	16 Pushing Your Buttons	17 Mandala
18 Worship	19 Breath Prayer 2	20 Dancing the Lord’s Prayer	21 Write Your Psalm	22 Peace Prayer	23 Water/Fire Reconciliation	24 Audiebant Divina
25 Worship	26 Meditation on an Image	27 Praying with Incense	28 Divine Letter	29 & 30 Fasting or Abstinence		31 Simplicity, Silence & Light

ABBREVIATIONS

Some of the prayer exercises are original, and some were developed by other writers. They are noted at the end of the exercises in brackets []:

- PB—Patricia Brown, *Paths to Prayer*
- TB—Teresa Blythe, *50 Ways to Pray*
- HM—Henry Morgan, *Approaches to Prayer*
- N—The Northumbria Community, *Celtic Daily Prayer*

The exercises that are ideal for a small group to try together or discuss are marked [*].

My prayer is that you will experience God's presence through prayer this Lent and discover new ways to pray for the rest of your life.

Pastor Darren
Lent 2018

Taize Worship, 4th Sunday of the Month at 5:00pm

Prayer and silence are at the heart of the Taize experience; there is no sermon. Taize music highlights simple phrases, usually from the Psalms or other pieces of scripture, which are repeated or sung in canon. The repetition is designed to help meditation and prayer during candlelit services. For more information on the Taize tradition of worship, visit www.taize.fr.

Meditation & Contemplative Prayer, Tuesdays, 5:30-6:00pm

Meditation & Contemplative Prayer is a method of prayer that prepares us to receive the gift of experiencing God's presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. This method of prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship. All are welcome to experience the voice of God in the power of silence and meditation.

FEBRUARY 14, ASH WEDNESDAY

MEDITATION IN ASHES

Purpose: Explore the meaning of Ash Wednesday.

Ash Wednesday launches the season of Lent by reminding us of our brokenness and mortality so that we can humbly participate in God's transformative grace that prepares us for the celebration of Easter. In addition to attending one of the Ash Wednesday services, begin the season with the following meditation based on two different ways to translate Job 42:3 & 6.

Step 1: If you attend an Ash Wednesday service, do steps 2-4 during the imposition of the ashes. If you are unable to attend a service, place some ashes or dirt in your hand.

Step 2: [Mortality] Read Job 42:3 & 6,

"I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know....Therefore I retract my words, and I am comforted concerning dust and ashes (i.e. my limitations)."

Pause for a moment and consider your mortality—your limitations and aspirations as a person who is both created in the image of God and a creature among all other creatures.

Step 3: [Repentance] Read Job 42:3 & 6,

"I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know....Therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes (i.e. my sins)."

Pause for a moment and remember your sins. Ask for God's forgiveness.

Step 4: As you wash the ashes or dirt off your hands, give God thanks for your place in God's creation and for the forgiveness you have received.

FEBRUARY 15

*DAILY OFFICE: LAUDS OR VESPERS

Purpose: Begin or end your day with prayers and scripture readings.

Known by various names ("canonical hours," "divine office," "liturgy of the hours") the Daily Office divides the day into fixed periods of prayer. All major Christian traditions have versions of it and divide the day in various ways. The two most familiar times for prayer are Lauds (morning) and Vesper (evening) with shorter periods of prayer throughout the day and night. There are particular Psalms and canticles that are traditionally used for these times of prayer.

Today, you can choose whether to begin your day with prayer or end your day with prayer. Whether you are a morning person or an evening person, we worship a 24-hour God.

The following format for morning and evening prayers comes from *The United Methodist Hymnal* (no. 876-879):

Morning	Evening
Say: O Lord, open my lips and I will declare your praise.	Say: Light and peace in Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God.
Sing: Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.	
Pray: New every morning is your love, great God of light, and all day long you are working for good in the world. Stir up in me the desire to serve you, to live peacefully with my neighbors, and to devote this day to your Son my Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.	Pray: I praise you and thank you, O God, for you are without beginning and without end. Through Christ, you created the whole world; through Christ, you preserve it. You made the day for the works of light and the night for the refreshment of my mind and body. Keep me now in Christ; grant me a peaceful evening, a night free from sin; and bring me at last to eternal life. Through Christ and in the Holy Spirit, I offer you all glory, honor, and worship; now and for ever. Amen.
Read Romans 12:1-2	Read Revelation 22:1-5
Silence	
Read Psalm 100	Read Luke 1:46-55
Pray [name specific persons, places and concerns after each rubric]: God, in your mercy hear my prayers for the people of North Church.... those who suffer and those in trouble.... the concerns of this local community.... the world, its people, and its leaders.... the church universal—its leaders, its members, and its mission.... the communion of saints [i.e., the dead]....	
Pray the Lord's Prayer	

FEBRUARY 16

YOU ARE A CHARACTER

Purpose: Use your imagination to pray with scripture.

Step 1: Select a short to medium length story in the Bible (Such as Genesis 12:1-9; Exodus 14:10-25; Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 6:30-44; Acts 16:16-34). Read the story.

Step 2: Read the story a second time. Pause periodically and imagine: What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell?

Step 3: Select one of the characters in the story and read it a third time while replacing your name for theirs. Imagine yourself as that character. How do you react? How do you feel?

Step 4: With an awareness of God’s presence through the scripture passage, begin to pray.

FEBRUARY 17

WORK PRAYER

Purpose: See manual tasks as prayer.

Brother Lawrence was a lay member of a Carmelite monastery in Paris in the 1600s. Although he never wrote, the Abbot of the monastery recorded their conversations about prayer. He once described manual labor this way: “We ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed.”

How to Make the Sign of the Cross

Using your right hand, you should touch your forehead at the mention of the Father; the lower middle of your chest at the mention of the Son; and the left shoulder on the word "Holy" and the right shoulder on the word "Spirit." (This is the Western version—Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopalian, etc. The Eastern or Orthodox version goes from right to left and the fingers are held so as to represent the Trinity and the two natures of Christ.)

Step 1: Select a manual task such as washing dishes, folding towels or shoveling dirt.

Step 2: Before you begin the task, make the sign of the cross and say, “In the name

of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” or “In the name of the Holy Trinity” to express that during this moment you are intentionally becoming aware that you and all creation live within the very life of God whose being is a dynamic relationship of eternal love.

Step 3: Do the task as an act of prayer, being aware that everything you do is done to the glory of God and is a channel through which the Holy Spirit comes to you.

Step 4: After the task is completed or your time has come to an end, offer a prayer such as the Lord’s Prayer.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT: FEBRUARY 18
“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name”

FEBRUARY 19

*PALMS DOWN, PALMS UP

Purpose: Centering oneself in the presence of God.

Step 1: Remove as many distractions as possible. Take several slow, deep breaths.

Step 2: Hold your hands palms down and envision giving all your burdens *to* God. Imagine these things falling out of your hands.

Step 3: When you can imagine your hands empty, turn your hands palms up and think about what you need *from* God. Imagine God putting those things in your hands.

Step 4: Close by saying, “So be it. Amen.”

FEBRUARY 20

THE LORD’S PRAYER OUTLINE

Purpose: Use the Lord’s Prayer as a basic outline for prayer.

Step 1 [Adoration]: Say, “Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.” Address God with various titles and names that are meaningful to you. Offer God praise.

Step 2 [Intercession]: Say, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.” Offer prayers of intercession for the world and individuals who are in need.

Step 3 [Petition]: Say, “Give us this day our daily bread.” Share your needs with God.

Step 4 [Confession]: Say, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.” Confess your sins to God and ask for God’s help for the day.

Step 5 [Thanksgiving]: Thank God for what God has done for you. End your prayer with “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

FEBRUARY 21

THREE-TIMES A DAY

Purpose: Pray 3 times today.

Based on Daniel 6:10, there is an old tradition in Christianity of facing East and praying three times a day. Facing East is based on the Natal Star shining in the East at Jesus' birth and the hope of the second coming of Christ from the East (Matthew 24:27). This exercise will help you develop a daily rhythm of short prayers to mark your day.

Decide in advance the three times of the day that you will pause for prayer. These moments are very short, just a couple of minutes. However, be sure that you will not be interrupted. At each time follow this outline:

- Make the sign of the cross and say, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" or "In the name of the Holy Trinity" to express that during this moment you are intentionally becoming aware that you live every moment within the very life of God whose being is a dynamic relationship of eternal love that includes you.
- Read a short selection of scripture (1 to 3 verses).
- Offer a short prayer of petition asking God to help you or someone else.
- Conclude with a short prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Feel free to add to this outline. For example, reading from a devotional such as *The Upper Room*, singing a hymn, saying the Lord's Prayer.

FEBRUARY 22

CAIM PRAYER

Purpose: How to pray for others when you do not know what to pray.

Caim or "encircling" prayer comes from the Celtic tradition and can be adapted for many different situations for the person who is being prayed for. The invisible circle symbolizes the love of God encircling the person.

These three examples come from the Northumbria Community, an intentional Christian community in Northern England that practices the Celtic tradition:

With your finger, draw a circle clockwise around yourself as you say one of these prayers:

Circle [name], Lord.
Keep protection near
and danger afar.
Keep peace within
and turmoil out. Amen.

God, Circle [name].
keep hope within,
Keep despair without.
Amen.

[name], the compassing of the Sacred Three be upon you.
The compassing of the Sacred Three protect you.
The compassing of the Sacred Three preserve you. Amen.
[N]

FEBRUARY 23

BODY PRAYER CONFESSION

Purpose: Use gestures to confession your sins.

Step 1: Make fists. Think about all the ways you have disobeyed or distanced yourself from God.

Step 2: Open your hands. Offer your sins to God, asking God to forgive you and free you from all sin.

Step 3: Cup your hands. Spend several moments focusing on God's forgiveness and acceptance of you.

Step 4: Place your hands together in front of your heart. Give God thanks. [PB]

FEBRUARY 24

*DAILY EXAMEN

Purpose: Prayerfully review the events of the day.

The practice of a daily examen (means "examination") comes from the Ignatian tradition (Jesuits) in Roman Catholicism. An examen is a series of reflection questions and prayers normally done at the close of the day. There are a variety of examens, some quiet elaborate. This version comes from United Methodist Bishop Sharon Brown Christopher:

Step 1: Give God thanks for the day and for God's presence.

Step 2: Reflect on these questions:

- Where did I notice the presence of God today?
- What do I need to confess?
- Whom do I need to forgive?
- For what do I give thanks?
- What has God taught me today?

Step 3: Name the day.

Step 4: Identify the gift(s) needed for tomorrow.

Step 5: Offer your life back to God. Let go of all troubling thoughts and concerns about the day.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT: FEBRUARY 25

"Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

FEBRUARY 26

BREATH PRAYER 1

Purpose: To follow breathing as it leads to God.

A breath prayer is a short petition or praise in rhythm with your breathing that helps you become aware of God's presence. In this version, a short phrase or scripture verse is used. The first half of is said or thought as you inhale and the second half is said or thought as you exhale. Here are a few sample phrases:

- Be still and now that I am God.
- Lord, have mercy.
- The Lord is my light and my salvation.
- Not my will, but yours
- Come, Holy Spirit

Step 1: Determine the amount of time you will designate for your breath prayer. Sit for a moment in silence and remember that God holds you in a loving presence.

Step 2: Settle into a comfortable position and begin to slow down your breathing. Take long, deep breaths using the full capacity of your lungs and relax your body.

Step 3: You may want to close your eyes as you silently recall the phrase. Pause after each part of the phrase to take 3 to 4 deep breaths before moving to the next part of the phrase. Slowly sync your inhalation and exhalation with the parts of the phrase.

Step 4: For the next 5 minutes, just breathe. Become aware of the rhythm of your breath. Do not analyze or interpret the phrase. Don't repress or scrutinize your thoughts but let them pass through your mind. Simply be in God's presence.

Step 5: Return to the phrase. As before, slowly sync your breathing with the phrase.

Step 6: Slowly come to the end of meditating on the phrase and open your eyes. [PB]

FEBRUARY 27

ALL-DAY LORD'S PRAYER

Purpose: Meditate on the Lord's Prayer throughout the day.

Use the Lord's Prayer as a series of *short* meditations that is woven throughout your day. At certain times of the day, pause for a moment and pray a line from the prayer and then reflect on its meaning for a few minutes, or, if your type of work allows, reflect on it while you perform your tasks. Let the phrase be the theme for the next part of your day. If needed, set the alarm on your phone or computer to remind you to move on to the next line. For example, the following breakdown is for 30 minute intervals for an 8-hour day.

9:00am—Our Father
9:30am—in heaven,
10:00am—hallowed be your name,
10:30am—your kingdom come,
11:00am—your will be done
11:30am—on earth as in heaven.
12:00pm—Give us today our daily bread.
12:30pm—Forgive us our sins
1:00pm—as we forgive those who sin against us.
1:30pm—Save us from the time of trial
2:00pm—and deliver us from evil.
2:30pm—For the kingdom,
3:00pm—the power,
3:30pm—and the glory
4:00pm—are yours, now and for ever.
4:30pm—Amen.

If it helps, print off the Lord's Prayer and keep it with you, and after you have finished meditating on a line cross it off.

FEBRUARY 28

SLOT PRAYER

Purpose: Make prayer a part of your ordinary routine.

Step 1: Pause from your work. Remain silent and still for 30 seconds. Say silently, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” or “In the name of the Holy Trinity” to express that during this moment you are intentionally becoming aware that you and all creation live within the very life of God whose being is a dynamic relationship of eternal love.

Step 2: Look at the things at hand and the task you are performing. Call to mind that God is present. Give God thanks.

Step 3: Look at the people around you. Call to mind that they are created in God’s image. Give God thanks for them and pray for their well-being.

Step 4: Then continue what you were doing as a prayer, doing everything for the glory of God.
[HM]

MARCH 1

*PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD

Purpose: Organize your prayers of intercession.

In preparation for this exercise you may want to read or watch the news and make a list of a variety concerns and issues.

Step 1: Begin your prayers with a title or attribute for God (e.g. “Great Sovereign,” “Loving Creator,” “Wise Judge”). Begin each intercession with, “Hear my prayers for....”

Step 2: Name the concerns in your neighborhood.

Step 3: Name the concerns in your city and county.

Step 4: Name the concerns in our state.

Step 5: Name the concerns in our nation.

Step 6: Name the concerns around the world.

Step 7: Conclude with this doxology:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God all creatures here below.

Praise the Sovereign, Savior and Spirit forever more. Amen.

MARCH 2

*LECTIO DIVINA

Purpose: Explore how scripture leads to prayer.

Lectio Divina, or “divine reading”, developed in the Medieval monasteries as a part of the Daily Office. It begins with reading aloud (lectio) that leads to pondering its meaning (meditatio) which, in turn, gives way to prayers (oratio) so that the individual spends the rest of the day in the presence of God (contemplatio).

Step 1: Select a scripture text of no more than 10 verses, such as one (or part of one) of the readings from Sunday’s worship (Other examples include Psalm 1; Isaiah 11:6-9; Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 10:38-42; Romans 8:12-17).

Step 2: Read the passage aloud. Say the word or phrase that catches your attention. Do not analyze it or try to interpret it. Silently repeat and envision it for 5 minutes.

Step 3: Read the passage aloud a second time. Ask yourself, “What does this passage reveal about God?” Ponder the question for 5 minutes.

Step 4: Read the passage aloud a third time. Ask yourself, “Based on the passage, what does God want me to do or to be?” Ponder the question for 5 minutes.

Step 5: With an awareness of God’s presence through the scripture passage, begin to pray. [PB]

MARCH 3

*WESLEYAN QUADRILATERAL

Purpose: Use the Wesleyan Quadrilateral as a form of spiritual discernment.

In the United Methodist tradition there are four sources of authority for reflecting on theological and ethical issues: scripture, tradition, reason and experience. You can use these four sources as a process for discernment.

Step 1: Draw a box and write a source of authority for each corner of the box.

Step 2: Write your question or issue to be discerned in the center of the box.

Step 3: Center yourself in prayer using a breath prayer. Ask for God’s direction as you begin your reflection.

Step 4: Reflect on each question. Write down notes and insights around the box and draw lines and symbols showing the connections among them:

- What does scripture say (directly or indirectly) about the issue?
- What, if anything, has the history of Christianity had to say about the issue?
- What has research and our capacity for reason revealed about the issue?

- Based on my faith experience and what I have seen in the faith of others, what can I learn that helps answer the issue?
- Which sources of authority seem to be in tension with each other? Which ones support each other?

Step 5: Stay in silence for several minutes and allow your discernment to settle in. Pay attention to your feelings. Which answers give you peace? Which ones disturb you?

Step 6: Close your time of discernment in prayer, thanking God for being present and expressing your trust that God will continue to guide you. [PB]

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT: MARCH 4 **“Give us this day our daily bread.”**

MARCH 5

THE JESUS PRAYER

Purpose: Center oneself in the presence of God by repeating the name of Jesus.

The “Jesus Prayer” is one of the oldest and most famous prayers in Christianity. Based on Luke 18:13 and Mark 10:47, it is a type of breath prayer. It is prominent in the Orthodox Tradition as a way to practice deep contemplation of the heart.

Step 1: Determine how long you will spend with this prayer.

Step 2: Sit in a comfortable position and breathe naturally. Or, spend this time walking or biking.

Step 3: Begin repeating the Jesus Prayer:

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Step 4: After some time has passed, emphasize each important word or phrase in order as you repeat the prayer, meditating on the significance of each:

“*Lord* Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

“Lord *Jesus* Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

“Lord Jesus *Christ*, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

“Lord Jesus Christ, *Son* of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son *of* God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, *have* mercy on me, a sinner.”

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy *on* me, a sinner.”

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, *a* sinner.”

Step 5: End with a moment of silence. [TB]

MARCH 6

SING THE LORD'S PRAYER

Purpose: Mediate on the meaning of the Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer has been set to music in a variety of ways. It can be sung like we do for communion (no. 2278 in the hymnal *The Faith We Sing*) and it can be chanted (no. 270 in *The United Methodist Hymnal*). There are many different recordings of it. Spend today periodically singing or listening to the Lord's Prayer. Try singing it to a tune you have heard during the day. Allow the music to help you pray. Before you go to sleep, listen or sing it one last time.

MARCH 7

WALL OF PRAYER

Purpose: Use art to express your prayers.

Step 1: At the beginning of the day, obtain a large piece of paper or poster board. Write the following headings for different types of prayer (in an arrangement of your choosing):

- Adoration (prayers of praise for who God is and thanksgiving for what God has done)
- Confession (prayers for forgiveness)
- Intercession (prayers for others)
- Petition (prayers for oneself)

Keep on hand a variety of pencils, pens, markers and other art supplies.

Step 2: Throughout the day (or if that is not possible, at the end of the day) write, draw, doodle, paint or collage pictures and symbols as your prayers (words are optional). Offer at least 1 prayer-image for each heading.

MARCH 8

CANTICLE OF THE SUN

Purpose: Use St. Francis' canticle as a prayer for the well-being of creation

Also known as "Canticle of the Creatures," this song by the 12th century saint will guide your prayers of praise and intercession for God's creation today.

Most High, all powerful, good God,
Yours are the praises, the glory, the honor, and all blessing.
To You alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no one is worthy to mention Your name.

Praise be to you, my Lord, through all your creatures,
especially through my Brother Sun,
who brings the day; and you give light through him.
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Praise be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon
and the stars, in heaven you formed them
clear and precious and beautiful.

Praise be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene,
and every kind of weather through which
You give sustenance to Your creatures.

Praise be You, my Lord, through Sister Water,
which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Praise be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom you light the night and he is beautiful
and playful and robust and strong.

Praise be You, my Lord, through Mother Earth,
who sustains us and governs us and who produces
varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

Praise be You, my Lord,
through those who give pardon for Your love,
and bear infirmity and tribulation.
Blessed are those who endure in peace
for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned.

Praise be You, my Lord,
through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no one can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those whom death will
find in Your most holy will,
for the second death shall do them no harm.

Praise and bless my Lord,
and give God thanks
and serve God with great humility.

There are a variety of ways to do this exercise:

- After each stanza pause to offer 1 prayer of praise and 1 prayer of intercession for different aspects of creation.
- After each stanza offer a prayer of confession for how we have violated that aspect of creation.
- Take a walk and offer this prayer as way to frame your thoughts during your walk.
- A variety of composers have set it to music. Listen to one of them as you offer your prayers for creation.

MARCH 9

PRAYER OF THE HEART

Purpose: To express your desires to God.

This is a type of breath prayer using two simple phrases—an attribute of God on the inhalation and a petition on the exhalation.

Step 1: Take about 4 deep, slow breaths and allow the tension of the day to flow out with each exhalation.

Step 2: Reflect on this question: What do you need at this moment? Spend time with the question so that you go beneath the surface-level desires to explore what you truly need.

Step 3: Summarize your desire in one or two words. For example, if you need peace, your phrase may be “inner peace,” “lasting peace,” or simply “peace.”

Step 4: Reflect on this question: What name for or attribute of God comes to mind? For example: Lord, Jesus, Father, Mother, Almighty, Spirit. Attributes include: merciful, wise, faithful, generous.

Step 5: Combine the divine name with your longing and repeat the prayer with the name on the inhalation and the desire on the exhalation while using “my” or “give me” to connect the two. For example, “Mighty God, give me peace” or “Lord, my lasting peace.” Spend several moments with this prayer and then use it throughout your day. [TB]

MARCH 10

PRAYER WALK

Purpose: A prayer using your body to experience God's presence.

Today, take a walk and pray while you walk. There are a wide variety of ways to pray while you walk. You can use one of the previous prayer exercises while you walk. You can use a variation of the Lectio Divina while you walk by paying close attention to the sights and sounds and smells as ways for encountering God. Another form of walking prayer is the labyrinth. A labyrinth is an ancient practice of following a spiraling path that leads to a center and then winds back out to the place where you started (For example, there is a labyrinth at the 100 Acres at the Indianapolis Museum of Art). For more ideas, read one of the books recommended in the introduction. [PB, TB, HM]

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT: MARCH 11

"Forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"

MARCH 12

"HERE I AM" PRAYER

Purpose: A beginner's prayer for silent meditation.

This prayer was developed by the Russian Orthodox Archbishop Anthony Bloom in his book *Beginning to Pray* and Teresa Blythe adapted it below:

Step 1: Resolve to be in prayer for at least 5 minutes without distractions (or longer, if you feel up to it).

Step 2: Be seated and say to yourself, "Here I am seated, doing nothing. I will do nothing for 5 minutes."

Step 3: Begin noticing your own bodily presence—how your body feels next to the chair; how your feet feel against the floor. Relax your body. Notice what you feel inside.

Step 4: Now notice the presence of all that is around you. Say to yourself, "Here I am in the presence of the room (or wherever you are)." Be aware of the objects, creatures and happenings around you. Just be present and silent in your environment. Relax even more.

Step 5: Now say to yourself, "Here I am in the presence of God." Repeat silently to God, "Here I am." Stay in that moment until the allotted time comes to an end. [TB]

MARCH 13

PARAPHRASE THE LORD'S PRAYER

Purpose: Explore different ways to understand the Lord's Prayer.

Take each line of the Lord's Prayer and put it into your own words. Feel free to expand or change the words and phrases in new ways (For example, instead of "Our Father" try "Our Mother"). Spend the day thinking about the different ways you can paraphrase each line. At the end of the day, write down your version of the Lord's Prayer.

MARCH 14

HYMN FOR THE DAY

Purpose: Use music as a form of prayer.

Today, select a hymn or a number of hymns and sing or listen to them as your prayers. There are several ways this can be done:

- Select one hymn and sing or recite it at various intervals throughout the day.
- Sing a hymn at the beginning of your day and another hymn at the close of the day.
- Set aside a specified time to sit with a hymnal and sing various hymns.
- Set a hymnal in your kitchen and sing various hymns while you cook.
- Listen to recordings of hymns.

MARCH 15

*PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD

Purpose: To remember and give thanks for loved ones who have passed away.

Step 1: Make a list of persons who have died in the past 12 months.

Step 2: Using this intercession from the *The United Methodist Book of Worship*, remember each person by name:

Eternal God, you have shared with us the life of [name(s)].

Before *he/she/they* was ours, *he/she/they* was yours.

For all that [name(s)] has given us to make us what we are,

for that of *him/her/them* which lives and grows in each of us,

and for *his/her/their* life that in your love will never end,
we give you thanks.

As now we offer [*name(s)*] back into your arms,
comfort us in our loneliness,
strengthen us in our weakness,
and give us courage to face the future unafraid.

Draw those of us who remain in this life closer to one another,
make us faithful to serve one another,
and give us to know that peace and joy which is eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH 16

PUSHING YOUR BUTTONS

Purpose: A self-examination as to why something or someone bothers you.

At noon and at the end of the day:

- **Step 1:** Center yourself in the presence of God through an extended period of silence. Become aware that the Spirit is working in you to reveal to you what you need to learn and know.
- **Step 2:** Ponder these questions:
 - Why does this bother me?
 - What memories or images from my past does it invoke?
 - What sin does it tempt me to commit? (Is it a sin?)
 - What different perspective does it invite me to consider?
 - What new attitude or action does it invite me to take up?
- **Step 3:** Close with an extended period of silence. At the end of the silence pray: “Lord, into your hands I commit my spirit. Amen.” Let go of all intrusive thoughts and perseverations on the issue/persons.

MARCH 17

MANDALAS

Purpose: Explore drawing as a form of prayer

Mandala means “center,” “wholeness,” or “circle” in Sanskrit. It is a circular drawing or painting with a symbolic pattern in it. The mandala is a symbol for the whole self, and as such can aid us in understanding ourselves as God’s creation.

To begin, place a plate on a sheet of paper and trace a circle. Next, begin to draw and color in the circle as you feel led. Let the center of the circle represent that which you see as the core of your identity. Ponder how the act of drawing is an experience of the Holy Spirit leading you and revealing your true self to you.

Conclude your time by saying, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” or “In the name of the Holy Trinity” to express that during this moment you were becoming aware that you live every moment within the very life of God whose being is a dynamic relationship of eternal love that includes you. [HM]

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT: MARCH 18
“Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.”

MARCH 19

BREATH PRAYER 2

Purpose: To follow breathing as it leads to God.

Step 1: Find a comfortable position to sit in for at least 10 minutes. Make sure you will not be distracted. Set a timer to ring when this time is up.

Step 2: Express to God your longing to experience God in this prayer. Then, let go of expectations and simply breathe. Exhale slowly, allowing each breath to find its own rhythm. Focus your attention either on your inhalation or exhalation. Be attentive to your body and how it responds to your breathing. If your attention wanders bring it back to your breath.

Step 3: When your time in prayer has come to a close, express your gratitude to God for the breath of life. [TB]

MARCH 20

*DANCING THE LORD'S PRAYER

Purpose: To experience the Lord's Prayer through movement.

Begin by bringing your hands together, palm to palm with fingers spread and touching each other. With hands still together, slowly touch your forehead, lips, and heart, saying, "In the name of the blessed holy Trinity." Then, cross your arms over your chest and bow.

Now pray the Lord's Prayer (saying, singing or to recorded music) while following these movements:

- "Our Father, who art in heaven" [Raise arms in a V position.]
- "Holy is your name" [Kneel down; bow your head; bring hands together in front of your chest, and bow low.]
- "Your kingdom come" [Sweep right hand outward and upward, palm up.]
- "Your will be done" [Repeat motion with left hand. Stand.]
- "On earth as it is in heaven" [Sweep your arms outward, palms down.]
- "Give us this day our daily bread" [Cup your hands in front of you. Bring your hands up and touch your mouth.]
- "Forgive us our sins" [Raise your hands over your head and let them flow down over your shoulders, as in a washing movement.]
- "As we forgive those who sin against us" [Open arms to your side and straighten your body.]
- "Lead us not into temptation" [Place your right hand up in front of your head at eye level.]
- "But deliver us from evil" [Repeat motion with left hand.]
- "For yours in the kingdom" [Sweep right arm, palm facing up, over your head.]
- "And the power" [Repeat with left arm.]
- "And the glory forever" [Swing both arms in a circle above your head.]
- "Amen" [Bring your arms down and bow.]

[PB]

MARCH 21

*WRITE YOUR OWN PSALM

Purpose: Use writing to express your prayer.

Step 1: Decide what kind of psalm you want to write. Here are several examples from the book of Psalms in the Bible:

- Communal Lament—58
- Individual Lament—3
- Communal Thanksgiving—107
- Individual Thanksgiving—116
- Praise—100
- National—72
- Covenant—50
- Wisdom—1

Step 2: Read samples of the type of psalm you want to write.

Step 3: Before writing, hold your palms upward on the table. Ask for the Holy Spirit to inspire you and dedicate your words to God's glory. Begin writing.

Step 4: When you are finished writing, read it aloud.

MARCH 22

*PEACE PRAYER

The Prayer of St. Francis expresses our commitment to be God's instruments of peace in the world. Today, use this prayer to focus your intercessions for world peace.

Step 1: Research international conflicts. Include those conflicts that do not make the headlines as well as the well-known problems around the world.

Step 2: Offer to God each conflict by name of the place and the groups or individuals involved, asking for God to bring a just and lasting resolution to the conflicts.

Step 3: Pray, sing or listen to a recording of the Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

MARCH 23

RECONCILIATION BY WATER OR FIRE

Purpose: A ritual for the confession of sin and assurance of forgiveness

Two of the biblical symbols for the Holy Spirit is fire and water. Today's exercise is a ritual that expresses our confession of sin and the assurance of forgiveness that the Spirit gives us. Sometimes we need a ritual, in addition to the words of our prayer, to alleviate the burden of guilt that we are carrying for our mistakes. There are two ways to do the ritual, one with fire and the other with water.

Step 1: Get some water or start a fire.

Step 2: Pray, "Lord, send your Spirit to cleanse me. May Christ make me a living sacrifice so that in every place I may praise you and proclaim your loving compassion, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen."

Step 3: Read Psalm 51.

Step 4: Confess your sins. If using water, write them on your hand with washable ink or state them aloud. If using fire, write them down on a piece of paper.

Step 5: Symbolize the forgiveness for and freedom from sin that God offers you. If using water, wash your hands and other body parts that symbolize the sins. If using fire, burn your list of sins.

Step 6: Read, "Hear the good news: Christ died for me while I was yet a sinner; that proves God's love for me. In the name of Jesus Christ, I am forgiven. Glory to God. Amen."

Step 7: Resist the urge to keep rethinking and rehashing your guilt. [HM]

MARCH 24

*AUDIEBANT DIVINA

Purpose: Listen to God through music.

Like a lectio divina, this “divine listening” uses music to hear the voice of God.

Step 1: Select a recorded song. (It does not need to be sacred or religious music; rather, it is any music that stirs your heart.)

Step 2: Listen to the song. Pay attention to the word or musical phrase that catches your attention. Do not analyze it or try to interpret it.

Step 3: Listen to the song a second time. Ask yourself, “What does this reveal about God?” Ponder the question for a few minutes.

Step 4: Listen to the song a third time. Ask yourself, “What does God want me to do or to be?” Ponder the question for a few minutes.

Step 5: With an awareness of God’s presence, begin to pray. [TB]

PALM SUNDAY: MARCH 25

“For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.”

MARCH 26

MEDITATION ON AN IMAGE

Purpose: Look for God through the aid of an image or an object.

All religions include the practice of meditation. The word “meditation” comes from the Greek *melete* which means “study,” “care” or “exercise” and denotes a disciplined exercise that fosters listening to and intimacy with God.

Step 1: Choose a time of day that allows for ample time (for example, 30 minutes) and no distractions.

Step 2: Choose an image or object from Holy Week that will be your focal point for meditation. Such as:

- Donkey or Colt (Mt. 21:5)
- Palm Branch (Mt. 21:8)
- Crowds of People (Mt. 21:8)
- Figs or Fig Tree (Mt. 21:19)
- Oil (Mk. 14:3)

- Coins (Mt. 26:15)
- Bread (Mt. 26:26)
- Wine (Mt. 26:27)
- Club or Sword (Mt. 26:47)
- Rooster (Mt. 26:74)
- Scarlet Robe (Mt. 27:28)
- Crown of Thorns (Mt. 27:29)
- Dice (Mt. 27:35)
- Cross or Crucifix
- Torn Curtain (Mt. 27:51)
- Rock or Stone (Mt. 27:60)

Step 3: As you begin, sit in a comfortable position with your body balanced, your hands resting and your back straight.

Step 4: Begin a process of removing all mental distractions and of focusing by slowing your breathing into a rhythm. You may want to use a mantra (a sacred word or phrase) to help you.

Step 5: Focus on the object or image. What is God revealing to you through it? What is God saying to you out of the silence?

Step 6: As you end your meditation, sit quietly and take time to refocus on your surroundings. You may want to close with a prayer, such as the Lord's Prayer. [PB]

MARCH 27

PRAYING WITH INCENSE

Purpose: Explore meditation on God's glory and grace.

In scripture, incense expresses the prayers rising to God. The smell of incense and burnt offerings permeated the Temple when Jesus went there for the last time and ran out the moneychangers in order to restore it to his Father's house of prayer (Matthew 21:13).

This exercise is divided into three sections of the same predetermined lengths of time that give ample opportunity for meditation (at least 5 minutes for each section). You may want to play appropriate music in the background.

Step 1: Light the incense and read Psalm 141:2, "My prayers rise like incense; my hands like the evening offering."

Step 2: Focus on the majesty of God. Read Revelation 8:3-4,

"Another angel with a golden censer came and stood at the altar; he was given a great quantity of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar that is

before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.”

Open yourself to an awareness that you are in the presence of God and contemplate the vast and intricate splendor of God. Conclude this section by saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the almighty who was and is and is to come.”

Step 3: Focus on the immensity of prayers rising before God. Read Malachi 1:11,

“For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts.”

Imagine throughout the world prayers rising up to God. Consider what their faces look like and how they feel. Conclude this section by saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the almighty who was and is and is to come.”

Step 4: Offer your intercessions. Read Revelation 15:3-4,

“And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:

‘Great and amazing are your deeds,

Lord God the Almighty!

Just and true are your ways,

King of the nations!

Lord, who will not fear

and glorify your name?

For you alone are holy.

All nations will come

and worship before you,

for your judgements have been revealed.’

Name your concerns for others. Conclude this section by saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the almighty who was and is and is to come.” [HM]

MARCH 28

DIVINE LETTER

Purpose: Use writing to help you pray.

Today, write a letter to God. Express the desires, questions and aspirations that are on your heart. This can be done as part of a journal. End your letter with these words: “Not my will but Yours be done” (Luke 22:42).

Option: Seal the letter in an envelope, date it, and in 3 months open it and read it again as you consider how your prayers have or have not changed.

MARCH 29-30: MAUNDY THURSDAY & GOOD FRIDAY

FASTING OR ABSTENANCE

Purpose: To experience material abstinence as a form of prayer.

Fasting is a form of prayer expressed through a temporary and intentional abstaining from food. In the Bible, fasting was done for repentance (e.g. Joel 2:12-13) and intercession (e.g. Acts 14:23). The purpose of fasting is twofold. The act of a temporary abstinence assists the heart and mind to focus on that which is being prayed for. Also, the physical deprivation embodies the desires of the petitioner.

The practice of fasting Thursday-Friday was recommended by John Wesley and a staple among early Methodists. It imitated the sequence of Jesus' Passion. There are many different ways to fast besides this format. For more on fasting, read Richard Foster's *The Celebration of Discipline* (chapter 4).

This exercise is designed to be done as a series of *short* reflections on the suffering and death of Jesus. Obviously, you could spend a lot of time on each question and image, but this process will enable you to experience the entire story.

This is a fast only from solid foods; continue to drink fluids and liquid meals (no alcohol). It begins after your meal on Thursday evening, the night of Jesus' last supper, and concludes Friday at 3:00pm when Jesus died. At various intervals throughout the fast, meditate on these events in Jesus' last hours.

If you are unable to fast, this exercise can be done by abstaining from something else that is a normal part of your day which gives you comfort or pleasure.

THURSDAY EVENING (after eating dinner)

Garden Gethsemane

- "Father if you are willing, remove this cup from me; not my will but yours be done." (Lk. 22:42)
 - Surrender to God's will. What is the "cup" that you do not want to pick up?
 - Imagine God helping you drink the cup like a mother helping a toddler with a cup.
- "Why are you sleeping?" (Lk. 22:46)
 - Sins of omission. How have I fallen asleep in my commitment to Christ?
 - Imagine God trying to wake you up.
- "Is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?" (Lk.22:48)
 - Sins of commission. How have I betrayed Christ in thought, word or deed?

- “Put your sword back, for all who live by the sword shall perish by the sword.” (Mt. 26:52)
 - What violence is in my heart, my words, my actions?
 - What systems of violence do I tacitly support with my lifestyle, outlook, spending?
 - Pray for the victims of violence.

From Gethsemane to the Palace of the High Priest

- “The High Priest stood up and said, ‘Have you no answer to these charges?’ But Jesus was silent.” (Mt. 26:62-3)
 - Why didn’t Jesus answer him?
- “I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” (Mt. 26:3)
 - Imagine what the power of Jesus the Anointed One of God would look and sound like?
 - Let these thoughts be your last ones as you drift off to sleep.

FRIDAY MORNING

In the Courtyard

- “Before the cock crows you will betray me 3 times.” (Mt. 26:75)
 - Pray that God will give you the strength to resist the temptation to deny or ignore Christ today.

From Caiaphas to Pilate

- “Are you the king of the Jews?” (Mt. 27:11)
 - How Jesus Christ the ruler of my life?
 - What political and economic forces operate in opposition to the teachings of Jesus?

From Pilate to Herod

- “He questioned him at some length but Jesus gave him no answer.” (Lk. 23:9)
 - When have I demanded that Christ answer me?
 - When is Christ silent in my life?

From Herod to Pilate

- “Release Barabbas for us!” (Lk. 23:18)
 - When have I placed my hopes and desires in someone or something other than Christ to free me?
 - What guilt would I rather live with than face Jesus Christ in my life?

The Sentencing

- “His blood be on us and our children.” (Mt. 27:25)
 - How am I “responsible” for the death of Jesus?

The Torture

- Imagine the physical pain Jesus went through.
- Imagine the mental anguish Jesus went through.
- Pray for prisoners of conscience around the world. For more information go to www.amnestyusa.org or www.persecution.com.

The Way to Golgotha

- “They laid the cross on Simon of Cyrene and made him carry it behind Jesus.” (Lk. 23:26)
 - How can we carry the cross of Christ today?
- “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.” (Lk. 23:28)
 - Grieve and lament the injustice and exploitation of women and children in our world today.

FRIDAY NOON TO 3:00PM

The Crucifixion

- “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Lk. 23:34)
 - Imagine yourself in the role of:
 - The mocking soldiers
 - The skeptical criminal
 - The mourning women
 - Confess all your sins and ask God to forgive you.
 - Think of everyone who has wronged you. Ask God to give you the grace to see them from Jesus’ vantage point on the cross.
- “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” (Lk. 23:42)
 - Use this phrase as a breath prayer.
 - Receive assurance through his words: “You will be with me in paradise.”
- “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mt. 27:46)
 - Remember those moments in your life when you have felt abandoned by God.
- “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” (Lk. 23:46)
 - Use this phrase as a breath prayer.
- “The curtain of the Temple was torn in two.” (Mt. 27:51)
 - Reconciliation: Praise God for all the ways Christ overcomes the barriers that separate us from God.
- “The earth shook, the rocks were split and the tombs were opened.” (Mt. 27:51-2)
 - Victory: Praise God for
 - The new life I have in Christ.
 - The evil and injustice in the world that Christ is overcoming.

- “Truly, this man is the Son of God.” (Mk. 15:39)
 - At 3:00pm, repeat: “Truly he is the Son of God.” Break the fast by eating a light meal.

MARCH 31: HOLY SATURDAY

DAY OF SIMPLICITY, SILENCE & LIGHT

The day before Easter, “Holy Saturday,” marks that period in the Passion Story after Jesus is dead and descends into Hell. It is a day of quiet simplicity prior to the great celebration of the resurrection on Easter morning.

Let today be a day of simplicity and solitude. Let it be a down-day that is unrushed. Minimize all sources of media. Unclutter the mind and simplify your tasks, doing only what is necessary. At the close of the day do the following spiritual exercise in anticipation of Easter.

NIGHT MEDITATION ON THE LIGHT

*Purpose: Explore the meaning of the Light of God.

Light is a potent symbol in scripture that reveals various dimensions of God and Christ. This exercise explores those meanings and can be combined with other prayer exercises.

Step 1: Set aside ample time free from distractions. Predetermine the amount of time you will spend.

Step 2: Light a candle. Allow your breathing to become slow and rhythmic as you set aside your mental distractions.

Step 3: As you watch the light, ponder the significance of its meaning about God and Christ. You can either:

- Allow your mind to wander with the image and let the Spirit reveal to you various meanings as they come to mind.
OR
- Read at various intervals these scripture verses and contemplate what they mean to you:
 - Then God commanded, “Let there be light”—and light appeared. (Genesis 1:3)
 - The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. (Isaiah 9:2)
 - The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out. (John 1:5)
 - Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness.” (John 8:12)

- You are the source of all life, and in your light we see light. (Psalm 36:9)
- You are like light for the whole world....In the same way your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)
- Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105)
- Wake up, sleeper, and rise from death, and Christ will shine on you. (Ephesians 5:14)
- For the darkness is passing away, and the real light is already shining. (1 John 2:8)
- If we love others, we live in the light, and so there is nothing in us that will cause someone else to sin. (1 John 2:10)

Leader's Guide for Small Groups
by Amy Sell

This small group study will be different from the studies in the past. We often think of prayer as a very private thing- our own personal communication with God. Prayer is also very meaningful when done corporately such as in a worship service.

During this study, you will have the opportunity to try many different styles of praying individually, but also together as a group. Below you will find a short outline of how you might use this guide with a group. Each week you are encouraged to try a different prayer.

You will find an asterisk (*) next to the prayer exercises that are perfectly suited to be done or shared in a group.

A simple format to follow:

- Begin with Prayer of Thanksgiving
- Follow by a simple check-in (how things are going this week, where you have seen God, etc.)
- Discussion centered on prayer and/or Sermon reflections of Lord's Prayer
- Share Prayer requests
- Try 1 of the prayer exercises as a group
- Closing prayer (as one person to close in prayer, use a popcorn prayer- hold hands and one person prays and squeeze hand of next person, etc.)

Use this time as a way to get to know people better and to develop relationships with others, yourself, and God in a more meaningful way. As a group, you can serve together in one of North's ministry areas (i.e.: Bread and Bowl). One thing that you can do with a group is Prayer Walk; either in the neighbor you meet in, around North's neighborhood or inside the church itself, praying for the different ministry areas. As a group, you attend a worship experience together, especially leading up to Holy Week or attend the Prayer workshop. Commit this time, these 40 days, to deepen your prayer life. There is no right or wrong way to pray, but you must begin somewhere. So, begin during these 40 days!